

American Community Survey Subject Definitions

The following subject definitions correspond to the variables presented in the map. For a complete listing of all subjects [click here](#).

Class of Worker

Class of worker categorizes people according to the type of ownership of the employing organization. Class of worker data were derived from answers to question 41 in the 2012 American Community Survey. Question 41 provides respondents with 8 class of worker categories from which they are to select one. These categories are:

1. An employee of a private, for-profit company or business, or of an individual, for wages, salary, or commissions.
2. An employee of a private, not-for-profit, tax-exempt, or charitable organization.
3. A local government employee (city, county, etc.).
4. A state government employee.
5. A Federal government employee.
6. Self-employed in own not incorporated business, professional practice, or farm.
7. Self-employed in own incorporated business, professional practice, or farm.
8. Working without pay in a family business or farm.

These questions were asked of all people 15 years old and over who had worked in the past 5 years. For employed people, the data refer to the person's job during the previous week. For those who worked two or more jobs, the data refer to the job where the person worked the greatest number of hours. For unemployed people and people who are not currently employed but report having a job within the last five years, the data refer to their last job.

The class of worker categories are defined as follows:

Private wage and salary workers – Includes people who worked for wages, salary, commission, tips, pay-in-kind, or piece rates for a private, for-profit employer or a private not-for-profit, tax-exempt or charitable organization. Self-employed people whose business was incorporated are included with private wage and salary workers because they are paid employees of their own companies.

ACS tabulations present data separately for these subcategories: "Employee of private company workers," "Private not-for-profit wage and salary workers," and "Self-employed in own incorporated business workers."

Government workers – Includes people who were employees of any local, state, or Federal governmental unit, regardless of the activity of the particular agency. For ACS tabulations, the data are presented separately for the three levels of government.

Employees of Indian tribal governments, foreign governments, the United Nations, or other formal international organizations controlled by governments were classified as "Federal government workers."

The government categories include all government workers, though government workers may work in different industries. For example, people who work in a public elementary school or city owned bus line are coded as local government class of workers.

Self-employed in own not incorporated business workers – Includes people who worked for profit or fees in their own unincorporated business, profession, or trade, or who operated a farm.

Unpaid family workers – Includes people who worked without pay in a business or on a farm operated by a relative.

Median Earnings – The median divides the earnings distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median and one-half above the median. Median earnings is restricted to individuals 16 years old and over with earnings and is computed on the basis of a standard distribution.

Work Status in the Past 12 Months

The data on work status in the past 12 months were derived from answers to Question 38 in the 2012 American Community Survey. People 16 years old and over who worked 1 or more weeks are classified as “Worked in the past 12 months.” All other people 16 years old and over are classified as “Did not work in the past 12 months.” The term “**worker**” as used for these data is defined based on the criteria for work status in the past 12 months.

Full-Time, Year-Round Workers – All people 16 years old and over who usually worked 35 hours or more per week for 50 to 52 weeks in the past 12 months.